

SCRA Consultation Response - Improving Multi-Agency Risk
Assessment and interventions for victims of domestic abuse
March 2019



SCRA Practice & Policy Team 2018

QUESTION 1: How can we ensure training on domestic abuse and appropriate risk assessment tools for public bodies, agencies and services staff?

If we decide that a single approach to risk assessment (like DASH) is suitable for use across public bodies and agencies then the Scottish Government could think about adopting that approach universally. If other assessment frameworks are also available then it may be that the Scottish Government could 'approve' risk assessment approaches that public bodies could select from.

The issue of training follows on from the risk assessment approach taken – and should be intrinsically linked to the effective use of the risk assessment framework within the work of the specific public body. The Scottish Government could choose to list public bodies who should have a mandatory approach to domestic abuse awareness as well as more specific / tailored training packages and it would then be for those bodies to report on their implementation of the mandatory approach in an agreed way.

QUESTION 2: In your view, what is the best model of multi-agency working for ensuring effective and early interventions for victims of domestic abuse?

SCRA thinks that a co-ordinated approach to identifying risk, protecting people at risk from harm and engaging them with supports designed to ameliorate their situation appropriately is the key to developing a sustainable nationwide model for domestic abuse work.

This 'model' should operate at different levels – and should take account of the research evidence into what works effectively at what stage of crisis within a family.





QUESTION 3: In your view, what is the best model for professionals assessing risk in relation to domestic abuse?

SCRA would not want to comment on the merits or otherwise of existing models. It may be that the Government 'approve' a limited number of models which can then be utilised by different public bodies according to their needs and the needs of the people they work with or for.

QUESTION 4: In your view, who are the key partners that should be involved in multi-agency working to support victims of domestic abuse?

Domestic abuse is a pervasive, corrosive and damaging aspect within any relationship where it occurs. As a result the negative effects of domestic abuse are difficult to predict and can occur within many different settings.

We think this means that the net of agencies who could potentially be involved in MARAC is quite wide. As a result we think that the constitution of a MARAC should involve Police, social work, education and health and may, at times, also involve other public bodies or 3rd sector agencies working with a family.

QUESTION 5: In your view, what guidance is required to support and embed effective multi-agency working for victims of domestic abuse?

Clear and comprehensive guidance would be useful for professionals and public alike. However, alongside the current revision of the Child Protection Guidance 2014 there is an opportunity to take a joined up approach to guidance which could give maximum benefit to professionals and members of the public.

In line with the emphasis being taken by the revision of the Child Protection Guidance we would ask that there is more of a focus on online materials being available, with a Government commitment to keep those materials relevant and up to date.





QUESTION 6: What protocols need to be put in place to ensure effective information sharing between agencies?

The working arrangements for the MARAC should be rooted in effective proportionate information sharing and it may be that National Guidance in relation to how and when this should happen will be sufficient .

It may be helpful for the information sharing principle to be clearly stated in Guidance – and if it is determined that the legal basis for the required information sharing is not clear then this might need a remedy.

Public bodies should have a clear legal basis and understanding for when, how and why information is shared. Families should also know exactly where information about them is going and who has access to that.

QUESTION 7: Do you think that multi-agency arrangements for protecting victims of domestic abuse should be placed on a statutory footing?

In order to provide consistency across the country it will be essential for there to be an established model of good practice – with clear expectations about what a local authority MARAC should (and should not) do.

This does not need to be a detailed single approach – it could be a framework of approach and expectations which local authority areas could deliver in different ways.

This could be given a statutory footing or it could be included in National Guidance. In either approach it should provide a baseline or suggestions for what should happen, when it should happen, how it should happen and could also specify what reporting/ evaluation of success should occur.





This would give children and their families a parity of experience across the country and would also underline the commitments made to Equally Safe in a very definite and structured way.

Regular reporting on the success of the MARAC in local authority areas and across Scotland would also demonstrate the work being done in different areas and could allow professionals to consider different ways to approach the work.

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